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Published in:
Europe-Asia Studies

DOI:
[10.1080/09668130801947960](https://doi.org/10.1080/09668130801947960)

IMPORTANT NOTE: You are advised to consult the publisher's version (publisher's PDF) if you wish to cite from it. Please check the document version below.

Document Version
Publisher's PDF, also known as Version of record

Publication date:
2008

[Link to publication in University of Groningen/UMCG research database](#)

Citation for published version (APA):

Hagendoorn, L., Poppe, E., & Minescu, A. (2008). Support for Separatism in Ethnic Republics of the Russian Federation. *Europe-Asia Studies*, 60(3), 353. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09668130801947960>

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Europe-Asia Studies

Publication details, including instructions for authors and subscription information:

<http://www.informaworld.com/smpp/title~content=t713414944>

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To cite this Article Hagendoorn, Louk, Poppe, Edwin and Minescu, Anca 'Support for Separatism in Ethnic Republics of the Russian Federation', *Europe-Asia Studies*, 60: 3, 353 — 373

To link to this Article: DOI: 10.1080/09668130801947960

URL: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/09668130801947960>

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Support for Separatism in Ethnic Republics of the Russian Federation

LOUK HAGENDOORN, EDWIN POPPE & ANCA MINESCU

Abstract

This study examines popular support for separatism among Russians and non-Russian titular nationalities (titulars) in 10 ethnic republics of the Russian Federation: Karelia, Komi, Tatarstan, Bashkortostan, Udmurtia, Adygea, Dagestan, Kabardino-Balkaria, Sakha-Yakutia and Tuva. A survey was carried out in the urban regions of these republics in 1999 and 2000 in which 5,233 Russians and 4,703 titulars participated. We found that perceived negative inter-group relations significantly contribute to support for separatism among titulars, but reduce support for separatism by Russians. In contrast, indicators of prosperity of the republic and prior separatist elite-activism predict support for separatism among both titulars and Russians.

OBSERVERS AND SCHOLARS HAVE WONDERED WHY THE COLLAPSE of the multi-ethnic USSR after the transition to democracy in 1991 was not followed by the disintegration of the multi-ethnic Russian Federation (Hale 2005; Hale & Taagepera 2002; Lapidus & Walker 1995; Treisman 1997). There are no conclusive answers, but it seems that the Russian Federation differs in some important economic, political and ethnic respects from the former USSR and that these differences have kept the Russian Federation intact (Hale 2005). First, the ethnic minority regions in the Russian Federation were and are less economically developed and more dependent on subsidies from the federation than were the Union Republics during the Soviet era. Therefore loyalty can be better rewarded and regional co-operation better undermined by economic sanctions (Hale & Taagepera 2002; Treisman 1997). Second, the geographical embeddedness and restricted political status of the autonomous republics reduces their ability to become independent. In comparison to the Union Republics, only a few of the autonomous republics of the Russian Federation have foreign

An earlier version of this paper was presented at the 2006 Scientific Meeting of the International Society for Political Psychology, Barcelona, 15 July 2006. The research was funded by the Dutch Organization of Scientific Research under the label 'Russians as minorities, post-communist ethnic relations in five semi-autonomous regions of the Russian Federation I and II' in 1997 and 1998. The Centre for Sociological Studies (OPINIO) of Moscow State University gathered the data. The authors would like to acknowledge the International Association for the Promotion of Co-operation with Scientists from the New Independent States of the Former Soviet Union (INTAS) for grant 03-51-4997.

borders and they have fewer formal rights. Moreover, while civic and ethnic nationalists in the Union Republics combined against the communist Soviet Union, ethnic nationalism is not a significant source of separatism in most of the autonomous republics (Lapidus & Walker 1995). Third, the size of the minority populations in the Russian Federation is substantially smaller than those of the USSR and there is no 'ethnic core' region that can start the disintegration of the Russian Federation in the same way as the Russian Federation did in the USSR (Hale 2005). In contrast to the USSR, the 'Russian core' of the Russian Federation is divided into 57 Russian-dominated *oblasti* and *okrugs*—as well as 32 ethnic minority regions, of which 21 have the status of autonomous republics and only five have a majority of non-Russian ethnic populations (Hale 2005; Lapidus 1999). Hale (2005) considers the division of the Russian core into *oblasti* to be the decisive factor preventing the disintegration of the Russian Federation.

Yet, it would be wrong to conclude that the stability of the Russian Federation is certain—it was obviously fragile in the first phase of its existence as an independent state. It would also be inaccurate to conclude that separatism has been absent. Rather, in some ways it was stimulated: in 1991, in order to acquire the support of the non-Russian ethnic republics for the secession of the Russian Federation from the Soviet Union, Boris Yel'tsin called on the republics to take 'as much autonomy as you can swallow' (Kahn 2002, p. 70). As a consequence a cascade of declarations of sovereignty of ethnic republics followed. Thereby the existence of autonomous ethnic republics as the official homelands of the non-Russian peoples (called 'titulars') became the legacy of the USSR to the Russian Federation.

The top-down suggestion to strengthen their independence stimulated the regional elites to explore the limits of autonomy. From 1992 to 2001 regional elites signed 42 bilateral treaties and about 200 related agreements with the federal central government—the five most important being those of Tatarstan, Bashkortostan, Buryatia, Sakha-Yakutia and Tuva. In this way, the regional elites established control over regional economic assets and, covertly, enhanced the privileged status of the titulars in the ethnic republics (Gorenburg 1999; see also Tishkov 1997, pp. 55 and 242). Remarkably, these declarations of sovereignty were initially issued without explicitly demanding support from the regional population(s) and there is no evidence for a strong initial bottom-up ethnic minority demand for autonomy across ethnic republics. However, it is not unlikely that the elite's attempts to enlarge regional autonomy, including outright separatism in some republics, itself became a mobilising factor enhancing popular support for separatism. Our aim in this article is to determine whether this is the case and which other factors contribute to popular support for separatism in (at least some) autonomous ethnic republics in the Russian Federation. We will not only examine the support for separatism of non-Russian ethnic groups—as is often done—but also the way in which Russians in the republics react to separatism. For this reason we focus on a set of factors, the effects of which may be completely different for titulars and Russians, namely their evaluation of the out-group and the inter-group relations in the republics. We believe that ethnic antagonism is an important factor driving the support for separatism among titular groups, but not among Russians. We also believe that support for separatism among Russians in the ethnic republics is not absent, but that it is based on different factors.

Ethnic antagonism has continually plagued a number of regions of the Russian Federation (Codagnone 1997; Stepanov 2000). Stepanov (2000) reports that 35 out of the 89 federal subjects of the Russian Federation were 'ethnically troubled' in 2000, and all ethnic republics fell under this category. However, not all ethnic conflicts are between Russians and titulars. Three major areas of conflict are the Caucasus, the Volga-Ural region and East Siberia. In the Caucasus, Avars in Dagestan are in conflict with returning Chechens who were deported in 1944, they are in conflict with the Nogai who are attempting to establish their own national territory, and with Kumyks who want to establish their own national autonomy. In Kabardino-Balkaria, the conflict is between Kabardins and separatist Balkars. In the Volga-Ural region, there are tensions between Tatars and Russians in Tatarstan; there is also antagonism between Tatars and Bashkirs in Bashkortostan and between Bashkirs and immigrating Russians. In eastern Siberia, titulars in Tuva have been openly anti-Russian since their annexation by the Soviet Union in 1944 and there were violent conflicts between them in 1990. In Sakha-Yakutia, control over the rich resources creates tensions between Russians and Yakuts. Stepanov (2000) found that socioeconomic factors (alienation of rich as well as poor republics from the centre), ethnic competition and cultural differences are the main causes of these tensions.

An important question however, is whether ethnic tensions lead to separatism (Hagendoorn *et al.* 2000, p. 9). Generally it is assumed that negative inter-group relations will stimulate separatist tendencies among the minority population (titulars). But evidence for this relation is scarce. Second, is separatism only supported by titulars and not by Russians in the ethnic republics? Third, what can be considered as separatism, and what are its reliable indicators? A demand for increased autonomy does not extend as far as a demand for complete independence. In that respect the claims of some Caucasian republics and Tuva are clearly an expression of outright separatism, but other ethnic republics mainly want control over their own resources and taxes. On the other hand, more far-reaching separatist intentions can be hidden under modest claims, and new claims can develop when previous aims have been achieved. In republics in the Volga-Ural region with a large Muslim population, both the aim to control resources and ethnic tensions form an uncertain mix, leading from less to more separatism (Stepanov 2000).

The idea that economic problems and cultural differences together form the explosive mix that ignites separatism (Stepanov 2000) is in line with the standard explanation of nationalism (Gellner 1983, p. 62; Hooghe 1992; Horowitz 1985, pp. 258 and 263; Treisman 1997). The standard model is that economic underdevelopment and cultural or linguistic differences block the upward social mobility of peripheral elites and these elites then mobilise the population to support secession (Gellner 1983, p. 62). But it is clear that the standard model does not explain all types of separatism. The cases of Scotland, Quebec and Catalonia show that sometimes separatist movements develop in regions that are not among the poorest (Emizet & Hesli 1995). The same was true for the actual separations achieved by the Czech Republic and Slovenia. The idea that economic underdevelopment rather than economic wealth is a cause of separatism is related to modernisation theory in which it is assumed that intensified inter-ethnic contact and higher education will erase ethnic identifications. However, there is evidence that the opposite occurs if ethnic competition increases. In the former

Yugoslavia, the most violent ethnic conflicts emerged in the republics with the highest ethnic diversity (Hodson *et al.* 1994) and higher education increased the salience of ethnic identities in the Soviet Union (Kaiser 1994, p. 235). According to the same line of explanation, it is not unexpected that the demand for independence arose first in the most resourceful Union Republics of the Soviet Union and not in the poorest (Emizet & Hesli 1995; Roeder 1991). Moreover, the high economic productivity and strong exporting power of the republics are the best predictors of separatist activism among leaders of the ethnic republics in the Russian Federation (Hale 2000; Treisman 1997). Hence, one important (instrumental) motive for separatism—kept outside the box of the standard explanation of nationalism—is that regional elites want to preserve local wealth for their own region and thereby place themselves in a stronger position of power (Roeder 1991). It is plausible that ethnic elites in the Russian Federation would find support among the titular population for this aim, but is it so implausible that Russians would also support it?

The path-breaking studies of Treisman (1997) and Hale (2000) show that the preservation of regional wealth is a motive for the separatism of regional elites in the Russian Federation. Treisman (1997) measured elite separatism by claims for greater autonomy up to outright independence, acknowledging that claims for autonomy may be reinforced by threats of independence and that the goal of independence may be hidden under claims for autonomy. Nine indicators of political—legal separatism from 1990 to 1994 form one index of separatist elite activism. The highest scores for separatist activity were measured for Chechnya, Tatarstan, Bashkortostan and Sakha-Yakutia. Separatist activity was regressed on a number of predictors in order to understand its reasons. It appeared that the status of the autonomous republic (rather than other administrative units), the presence of a Muslim titular group, a nationalist ethnic-minority leader as president of the parliament, and a high level of exports and regional economic resources are the main predictors of elite separatist activity. Separatism was suppressed in regions with past ethnic violence and a long tradition of organised nationalism. Hale (2000), following a prior study by Emizet and Hesli (1995), found similar results. His index of elite separatism was the difference in time between the first and the following declarations of sovereignty of ethnic republics in the Soviet Union and the Russian Federation, on the assumption that the most eager secessionists would have declared their sovereignty earlier. The results showed that the economic wealth of the republic (measured by retail commodity turnover per capita), the lack of assimilation of the titular group (measured by titular language use in the Soviet Census of 1989), and previous autonomy and separatism in adjacent regions are the main predictors of elite separatist activity (Hale 2000).

Two factors explaining separatism stand out in the research by Treisman (1997) and Hale (2000): economic wealth and ethnic antagonism. Both studies find that economic wealth promotes separatist elite activity. Hale (2000) adds that ethnic-religious difference and activism contribute to separatism and Treisman (1997) finds that past ethnic conflict reduces separatism. In any case ethnic difference plays a role in elite separatist activity. Does this mean that regional elites mix economic reasons and ethnic minority dominance claims in their separatist activity? Gorenburg's (1999) in-depth study of elite rhetoric and programmes in Tatarstan, Bashkortostan, Chuvashia and Khakassia suggests that this is true, but the ethnic revival aims are not clearly

stated. It appears that the leaders of ethnic republics actually de-emphasised the ethnic revival aspects of their separatist claims while focusing on the economic advantages of sovereignty. But simultaneously they quietly adopted laws and programmes granting the titular ethnic groups legal privileges, promoting the ethnic culture and language, expanding native-language schooling, promoting ethnic symbols and offering members of titular ethnic groups preferential access to top administrative positions (Gorenburg 1999).

It is likely that such ethnic revival policies increased ethnic awareness among the titular populations and among Russians in the ethnic regions, although regional leaders may not have had the intention of alienating their Russian inhabitants (Gorenburg 1999). It was part of standard Soviet policy that specific ethnic policies were allowed in ethnic regions. The expansion of these policies, however, might project an image of inter-group relations in which titulars are gaining and Russians are losing by increasing autonomy.

Inter-group relations

From an inter-group relations point of view it is very likely that the way in which Russians and titulars in the ethnic republics perceive and evaluate each other affects their support or rejection of separatism. However, the evidence pertaining to this effect is limited. In a study of minority nationalism based on the Colton–Hough survey among 15 titular groups in 13 ethnic republics in 1993, Gorenburg (2001) found that support for regional separatism was predicted by age, (male) gender, higher education, elite membership, (ethnic) migration, and Muslim or Buddhist religion, which are largely the same factors as found by Hale (2000) and Treisman (1997) for elite separatist activism. There is, to our knowledge, no evidence on the degree of support for separatism among the Russian inhabitants of the ethnic republics and on how mutual inter-group perceptions affect support for separatism among titulars and Russians.

A reason why titulars and Russians may differ in their support for separatism is that their definition of the boundaries of the in-group may be associated with what they consider their home territory. The definition of group boundaries is important because in general co-operation diminishes and trust declines beyond the boundaries of the in-group as is argued in the classic inter-group studies of Tajfel (1982). Brewer (1999) shows that this social differentiation implies less positive, although not necessarily completely negative, out-group evaluations. Titulars have reasons to define their in-group restrictively. Historically they are justified in considering themselves the legitimate dominant group of the republic; after all, according to the Soviet legacy they are the 'owners' of the ethnic republic that is named after them. In balancing their needs for inclusion (co-operation and trust) and differentiation, optimal titular distinctiveness is achieved by identifying with the titular group and simultaneously with the ethnic republic (Brewer 1999). Minescu *et al.* (2008) found evidence for this effect across 10 ethnic republics in the Russian Federation, but for Russians in the ethnic republics optimal distinctiveness includes the Russian Federation (Minescu *et al.* 2008). This is partially due to a civic rather than an ethnic criterion of inclusion, namely their belonging as Russians to the Russian Federation or the former Soviet

Union (Hale 2005). Evidence for this type of association between the ethnic Russian and civic (federal or Soviet) identity is also found in the former Union Republics (Hagendoorn *et al.* 2001, p. 40). Only a minor proportion of Russians in ethnic republics is found to combine a Russian with a titular or republican identification (Poppe & Hagendoorn 2001), and mainly only those Russians married to a non-Russian partner or being able to speak the titular language (Poppe & Hagendoorn 2003). The association of Russian identity with titulars and the titular republic is easily destroyed by economic and political competition between the two groups (Poppe & Hagendoorn 2003). Therefore it is to be expected that titular in-group identification entails a claim to 'ownership' of the republic and thus stimulates support for separatism. Russian in-group identification, in contrast, extends to the Russian Federation, the ethnic republics being part of it, and therefore triggers opposition to separatism.

A second reason why titulars and Russians may differ in their reaction to separatism is related to how they can cope with the consequences of economic and political competition between the two groups. Theory and extensive research on group conflict make clear that inter-group competition over scarce resources—including status, power and privileges—leads to negative inter-group evaluations and inter-group hostility (Bobo 1999; Bobo & Hutchings 1996; Blumer 1958; Sherif 1967). This evidence extends to inter-group conflict in the former Soviet Union (Hagendoorn *et al.* 2001, pp. 84 and 118; Hagendoorn & Poppe 2004; Poppe & Hagendoorn 2004). The question then arises of how the effects of ethnic competition affect support for separatism among Russians and titulars. We expect that titulars will consider the exclusion of Russian as an effective strategy to cope with ethnic competition, while Russians will consider watering down titular competition and maintaining external protection of the position of Russians more effective. Autonomy allows the titulars to control the labour market and political system in the republic and to exclude Russians. Russians, in contrast, will seek to be protected against titular competition by maintaining the ethnic republics under the control of federal regulations and therefore they will oppose separatism.

A third inter-group factor that will have the opposite effect on the support for separatism among titulars and Russians is the negative view of the out-group. Social identity theory generally predicts that any social categorisation will imply a social comparison process that tends to lead to a more positive evaluation of the in-group than of out-groups (Tajfel 1981, 1982). The evidence for this tendency is overwhelming, as is shown in the overview by Ellemers *et al.* (1999). The inter-group evaluations are captured in out-group stereotypes which can be less or more negative but generally are less positive than the in-group stereotype. They comprise the perceived discrepancies between in-group and out-group competence and morality and thus diagnose the cooperativeness and trustworthiness of out-group members (Phalet & Poppe 1997; Fiske 2000). When Russians and titulars evaluate each other negatively in the context of the ethnic republics, titular groups have only a limited number of allies to protect themselves against rejection by Russians, namely other non-Russian ethnic groups in the republic. By enlarging the autonomy of the republic, titulars secure their status and position in another way, namely by becoming the dominant group. In contrast, Russians lose status and position if they are no longer

the representatives of the dominant group of the federation in the republic. Hence, negative out-group evaluations may lead titulars to support separatism, while they lead Russians to oppose separatism. Even more so, Russians may only support separatism in the ethnic republic if they trust titulars and can co-operate with them, in other words when they evaluate titulars in a positive way.

Finally, group size has different consequences for Russians and titulars. Group size is an important determinant of group position (Horowitz 1985, p. 194) and it is a multiplier of the resources that groups have to maintain their power (Blalock 1967, p. 113; 1982, p. 106). A larger out-group is for titulars a larger threat to their status, position and power than for Russians, because the power of titulars is restricted to the titular republic. A Russian majority can outvote policies aimed at maintaining or enlarging the prerogatives of the titular group. Extended autonomy or independence puts a halt to this. Therefore a larger out-group size will stimulate titulars to endorse separatism and ensure their domination of the republic. In contrast, a larger size of the titular group will be a reason for Russians to oppose separatism, because their position can only be maintained through federal control. Hence, we expect that a larger size of the out-group reinforces titular support for separatism, while it reduces Russians' support for separatism.

Common reasons to support separatism

It should be stressed that titulars and Russians also have common reasons to support separatism because it offers them common rewards. The most important of these rewards is the maintenance or increase of the wealth of the republic and this may be a major reason for titulars and Russians to support separatism in republics which are rich in resources and produce a large gross regional product (Hale 2000; Kahn 2002, p. 161; Treisman 1997). As a rule, wealthier republics (should) contribute more to the budget of the federation, while poor republics receive subsidies through federal redistribution. If separatism is presented as a means to increase retained wealth, both Russians and titulars may be mobilised to support separatism. The general aspect of this reason to support separatism is to maintain or enlarge economic prosperity. On the one hand prosperity is indexed by the actual gross regional product and on the other hand it is indexed by the experience of actual or future prosperity, as expressed in the level of employment and in optimism about the economy and personal economic opportunities. A concomitant political-economic aspect of prosperity is the required or actual share of the republic's budget transferred as taxation to the federation. Conversely, economic underdevelopment, high unemployment, a climate of economic pessimism, and economic dependence on the federation may be reasons for both titulars and Russians to oppose separatism.

In addition to these economic reasons to support separatism, titulars and Russians may have political reasons to support or oppose separatism. One reason to oppose it is that separatism may trigger counter-measures from the government of the Russian Federation that may hurt both Russians and titulars, including political pressure in the form of economic sanctions and the threat of military intervention. The more likely titulars and Russians estimate that the Federal government will interfere, the more they will oppose separatism. A second factor is that both Russians and titulars have

become acquainted with increased autonomy for the republics and have been mobilised to support further separatist policies by the success of past elite separatist action. This effect may be stronger for titulars than Russians in republics where increased autonomy implies an expansion of ethnic-revival policies (Gorenburg 1999).

The present study

We will test the differential effect of inter-group factors and political–economic factors on the support of separatism among Russian and titular groups in 10 ethnic republics of the Russian Federation. Our main question is whether inter-group factors divide, while political and economic factors unite titulars and Russians in their support for regional separatism. Specifically, our hypotheses are: (1) in-group identification will strengthen support for separatism among titulars, but will reduce support for separatism among Russians; (2) perceived ethnic competition will strengthen the support of titulars for separatism, but will reduce the support for separatism among Russians; (3) negative out-group evaluations will strengthen the support of titulars for separatism, but will reduce the support for separatism among Russians; (4) a larger size of the out-group will strengthen the support of titulars for separatism, but will reduce the support for separatism among Russians; (5) in republics with better economic conditions both Russians and titulars are more supportive of separatism than in republics where these conditions are less positive; (6) the estimated likelihood that the Russian Federation will sanction separatism reduces support for separatism among Russians and titulars; and (7) previous elite activism stimulates support for separatism among Russians and titulars, but the effect is stronger for titulars.

Methods

Data and participants

We use survey data collected among Russians and titulars in 10 autonomous ethnic republics of the Russian Federation in 1999 and 2000: Karelia, Komi, Tatarstan, Bashkortostan, Udmurtia, Adygea, Dagestan, Kabardino-Balkaria, Sakha-Yakutia and Tuva. We selected republics varying in their numerical proportion of titulars and Russians, and differing on economic criteria.

The survey was carried out in randomly selected urban areas with at least 10% of Russian residents of the republics (in total 41 cities, including the capital). Streets in the cities were selected by a random-route procedure and house numbers were randomly selected. The resident with the birthday closest to the day of the interview was invited to participate in the survey. By this approach the refusal percentage was kept at a minimum level (3% refused). At least 450 Russians and 450 titulars in each of the 10 republics participated. In total 9,936 respondents were interviewed of which 5,233 identified themselves as Russians and 4,703 as titulars. Respondents were coded in the data set as Russian or titular when their personal group identification matched their passport nationality. Of the respondents, 44.2% are male and 55.8% are female. Ages range between 16 and 98 years with a mean of 40.8 years.

Measures

Separatism was measured by two statements on separation from the Russian Federation: 'The republic should become fully independent from Russia' and 'The republic should join a regional union with states or republics similar in culture or religion to ours'. Both statements express or imply separation from the Russian Federation. Respondents agreed or disagreed on a five-point Likert-scale format from 'completely disagree' to 'completely agree'. The correlation between the responses to the two statements across all republics is 0.60. The Cronbach's alpha of the scale is 0.70 for titulars and 0.74 for Russians. A mean separatism score was computed and normalised to scores from 0.00 to 1.00. A number of relevant predictors were used to test the hypotheses. Two of them, education and age, were measured to control for them in the effects of the other predictors. Education was measured as high, middle or low, and age was indicated in years.

The inter-group factors of ethnic identification, economic and political competition, negative out-group evaluations and out-group size were measured as follows. Ethnic identification among Russians was measured by two statements with a five-point Likert-scale format from 'completely disagree' to 'completely agree': 'It is of great importance for me to be a Russian' and 'I am proud to be a Russian'. The two items correlate 0.73, and the Cronbach's alpha of the scale is 0.84. A mean score was computed. For titulars ethnic identification was measured by reactions to the statements: 'It is of great importance for me to be regarded as a fellow [titular] person by the [titulars]' and 'I am proud to be regarded as a [titular] person'. The name of the titular group was specified in the question. The two items correlate 0.77, and the Cronbach's alpha of the scale is 0.91. Language assimilation (fluency in speaking the out-group language) was used as a (negative) measure of ethnic identification. However, in the analysis the (negative) effect of language assimilation on separatism was much weaker in comparison to the effect of ethnic identification for titulars, and had no effect for Russians. Therefore language assimilation has not been included in the following discussion of the analysis.

Economic and political competition was measured by six statements with five-point Likert-scales from 'completely disagree' to 'completely agree' in which the target in[-group] and/or out[-group] was specified: 'The political interests of the [titular/Russian] population in the republic are in conflict with those of the [Russians/titulars] in this republic'; 'The economic interests of the [titular/Russian] population in the republic are in conflict with those of the [Russians/titulars] in this republic'; 'The [titular/Russian] people have better job opportunities than the [Russians/titulars]'; 'The [titular/Russian] people want to exploit the [Russian/titular] labour force for its own benefit'; 'The [titular/Russian] people want to exploit the republic's natural resources for its own benefit'. We also included a further measure of the attributed ambition of the out-group to have political control over the republic (with five answering categories from 'do not strive for political influence' to 'strive for absolute political power'). The responses to the items are strongly intercorrelated: the Cronbach's alpha of the competition scale is 0.80 for Russians as well as for titulars.

Negative out-group evaluations were measured by eight stereotype attributions in percentages (Brigham 1971). The stereotypes were selected on the basis of previous

research (Hagendoorn *et al.* 2001; Phalet & Poppe 1997). Russians in the republic are the out-group for titular respondents and the titular group of the republic is the out-group for Russian respondents: for instance 'Tatars' in Tatarstan or 'Tuvans' in Tuva. The traits peacefulness, hostility, honesty, deceitfulness, smartness, rudeness, initiative and laziness were successively attributed on scales from 0% to 100% following the question: 'How many people of [group X] in this republic in your opinion have the following characteristic?' In principal component analysis the traits load either highly positive (positively formulated traits) or highly negative (negative traits) on the first un-rotated factor, with the exception of 'taking initiative'—which has a load close to zero. A mean score of the negative and reversed positive attributions was computed, excluding 'taking initiative'. The Cronbach's alpha of the negative out-group stereotypes scale is 0.83 for Russians and 0.76 for titulars.

We considered two measures of out-group size. The first is the percentage of the out-group in the population of the republic as indicated in the 1989 Census (McAuley 1991). The second is the percentage of the out-group in the population of the republic in the 2002 All-Russian Census (Goskomstat 2002). The first measure of out-group size precedes our survey of support for separatism by 10 years, while the second census was carried out two years after our survey in 1999/2000. We believe that the preceding measure of out-group size will more likely have a causal effect on the development of support for separatism than the measure indicating the numerical relations two years later, but we will report the effect of both measures of out-group size.

The relevant political and economic predictors were measured as follows. The expectation that Moscow will exert pressure to prevent separatism of the republic was measured by the question: 'If the republic decides to become independent, what steps do you think the Centre will take?' The likelihood of putting the republic under political pressure, establishing an economic blockade, or using military force had to be estimated separately. The scale was from 1 (very low) to 5 (very high). The Centre pressure scale has a Cronbach's alpha of 0.64 for Russians and 0.68 for titulars. The mean of the three estimations was computed.

For elite activism we used the measure of Treisman (1997), which includes nine indicators of political–legal separatism in the years 1990–1994 (declaration of sovereignty, claim of higher administrative status, own constitution, precedence of regional over federal law or constitution, referendum on sovereignty, boycott of federal election, declaration of independence, refusal to send conscripts, and independent foreign policy). A second indicator of elite activism used by Hale (2000) and Kahn (2002, p. 104) is the (lower) number of weeks after which the republic followed the declaration of sovereignty of Estonia. It appeared that this measure is collinear with a number of other predictors of separatism. This is also true for Treisman's (1997) measure, but to a much lesser degree.

Several measures were used for economic prosperity of the republic. The first was economic optimism, measured by four statements on the economic situation of the republic and of the respondent in the last two years and the next two years. The statements form one scale with a Cronbach's alpha of 0.75. The second was Gross Regional Product (GRP) in 1998 (Goskomstat 1999). An alternative for the GRP, taking better account of the consequences of the economy for the population, is the percentage unemployed for the republic in 1998 (Statistical Yearbook Goskomstat

1999, pp. 108–13). Another index of wealth of the republic is the tax transfer to the Russian Federation in 1995 (McAuley 1997) indicating the difference between tax paid by the republic and subsidies received by the republic. Because the two measures of elite activism and the last three measures of economic prosperity are alternatives, it was to be expected that they are collinear among themselves or with other predictors. This appeared to be true. Therefore the predictors of elite activism and economic prosperity were entered in separate regression models. The values for elite activism and the economic predictors are presented in Table 1 and Appendix A. All variables in the regression models were normalised to a score ranging from 0 to 1.

Results

Support for separatism

Titulars support separatism significantly more ($M=0.50$) than Russians ($M=0.28$). Titular support for separatism is strongest in Tuva (0.58), Sakha (0.57), Tatarstan (0.57), Bashkortostan (0.57) and Adygea (0.53) and weakest in Dagestan (0.25), as can be seen in Table 2. Among Russians, support for separatism is strongest in Karelia (0.45), Sakha (0.42), Bashkortostan (0.39) and Udmurtia (0.39) and weakest in Dagestan (0.07) and Kabardino-Balkaria (0.08). There is a large discrepancy between the support for separatism of titulars (strong) and Russians (weak) in Tuva: 49.5% of titular respondents score above the mid-point (0.50) of the scale, while only 7.8% of Russians do so. The same discrepancy is present in Adygea (44% against 5%) and, to a lesser degree, in Kabardino-Balkaria (31% against 4%). This shows that support for separatism in Tuva, Adygea and Kabardino-Balkaria comes primarily from titulars.

TABLE 1
GROUP SIZE AND POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC CHARACTERISTICS OF 10 REPUBLICS OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION

<i>Republics</i>	<i>% Titulars</i>	<i>% Russians</i>	<i>Elite activism</i>	<i>Tax transfer</i>	<i>Gross regional product</i>
<i>European North:</i>					
Karelia	10.0	73.6	5	295	14,607
Komi	23.3	57.7	5	1,046	24,545
<i>Volga-Urals:</i>					
Tatarstan	48.5	43.3	11	469	17,924
Bashkortostan	21.9	39.3	8	597	15,603
Udmurtia	30.9	58.9	3	469	12,233
<i>North Caucasus:</i>					
Adygea	22.1	68.0	2	–100	7,519
Dagestan (Avars)	27.5	9.2	3	–659	4,104
Kabardino-Balk.	48.2	32.0	4	–318	8,067
<i>Siberia:</i>					
Sakha-Yakutia	33.4	50.3	7	–295	33,426
Tuva	64.3	32.0	3	–1,245	595

Sources: Percentages of titulars and Russians: McAuley (1991); elite activism: Treisman (1997); tax transfer (tax leaving the republic and subsidies received by the republic in 1995): McAuley (1997); gross regional product: Goskomstat (1999). Normalised size outgroup = (% outgroup size)/100; normalised elite activism: (elite activism)/57; normalised tax transfer = (tax transfer + 1,245)/2291; normalised gross regional product = (gross regional product)/33,426.

TABLE 2
SUPPORT FOR SEPARATISM AMONG TITULARS AND RUSSIANS

<i>Republics</i>	<i>Titulars (%)</i>	<i>M (%)</i>	<i>Russians (%)</i>	<i>M (%)</i>
<i>European North:</i>				
Karelia	0.50 ^{bc}	(39.6)	0.45 ^a	(32.4)
Komi	0.45 ^{cd}	(33.3)	0.32 ^b	(22.2)
<i>Volga-Urals:</i>				
Tatarstan	0.57 ^a	(50.6)	0.32 ^b	(21.4)
Bashkortostan	0.57 ^a	(52.7)	0.39 ^a	(26.9)
Udmurtia	0.47 ^{bc}	(36.5)	0.39 ^a	(25.5)
<i>North Caucasus:</i>				
Adygea	0.53 ^{ab}	(44.2)	0.12 ^d	(4.8)
Dagestan (Avars)	0.25 ^c	(13.4)	0.07 ^a	(2.1)
Kabardino-Balkaria	0.40 ^d	(30.6)	0.08 ^d	(3.8)
<i>Siberia:</i>				
Sakha-Yakutia	0.57 ^a	(52.4)	0.42 ^a	(31.3)
Tuva	0.58 ^a	(49.5)	0.19 ^c	(7.8)
<i>Across republics</i>	0.50	(40.9)	0.28	(18.1)

Note: Scores are mean scores between 0.00 and 1.00 recoded from five-point scales. A higher score indicates more support for separatism. Different superscripts (a–e) indicate significant differences between republics ($p < 0.01$) as yielded by analysis of variance (Tukey's post-hoc test). Between brackets are the percentages of respondents agreeing above 0.50 with the separatism statements.

There is more shared support for separatism among titulars and Russians in Karelia (40% and 32%) and Sakha-Yakutia (52% and 31%). The results for the other republics are in between these examples (see Table 2).

Negative evaluation of the inter-group relations between titulars and Russians

The Tuvans have the most negative stereotypes about Russians in their republic, whereas the Balkars in the bi-titular republic of Kabardino-Balkaria and in particular the Avars in the multi-titular republic of Dagestan are the least negative about Russians (see Table 3). Dishonesty of out-group members is always the most important attributed negative evaluation. The Russians in the republics, in return, are the most negative about titulars in Tuva, followed by Adygea, Dagestan and Bashkortostan. Russians are least negative about titulars in the North European republics, Karelia and Komi, and the Volga-Ural republics Tatarstan and Udmurtia. As can further be seen in Table 2, the titulars in Tuva and Sakha-Yakutia perceive strong political and economic competition from Russians in their republic, while the Avars, Tatars and Balkars perceive less competition from Russians in their republics. The Russians, on the other hand, perceive most competition from titulars in Tuva, followed by Adygea and Dagestan, and least in Komi and Karelia.

In sum, mutual inter-group perceptions, in terms of stereotypes and inter-group competition, are most negative in Tuva. Russians are perceived relatively positively by titulars in the multi-titular republics of Dagestan and Kabardino-Balkaria, but Russians perceive the titulars in these republics less positively. In the northern European republics of Karelia and Komi the inter-group relations seem to be most balanced and relatively positive.

TABLE 3

NEGATIVE OUT-GROUP STEREOTYPES AND PERCEIVED COMPETITION AMONG TITULARS AND RUSSIANS

<i>Republics</i>	<i>Negative stereotypes</i>		<i>Perceived competition</i>	
	<i>Titulars</i>	<i>Russians</i>	<i>Titulars</i>	<i>Russians</i>
<i>European North:</i>				
Karelia	0.38 ^{de}	0.36 ^e	0.32 ^{de}	0.24 ^f
Komi	0.41 ^{bcd}	0.37 ^e	0.38 ^{bc}	0.25 ^f
<i>Volga-Urals:</i>				
Tatarstan	0.39 ^{cde}	0.37 ^e	0.24 ^{fg}	0.45 ^{cd}
Bashkortostan	0.43 ^{bc}	0.42 ^d	0.34 ^{cd}	0.45 ^{cd}
Udmurtia	0.42 ^{bc}	0.37 ^e	0.37 ^e	0.30 ^c
<i>North Caucasus:</i>				
Adygea	0.43 ^b	0.50 ^b	0.28 ^{ef}	0.52 ^b
Dagestan (Avars)	0.30 ^f	0.46 ^c	0.20 ^g	0.48 ^{bc}
Kabardino-Balkaria	0.37 ^e	0.39 ^{de}	0.25 ^f	0.45 ^{cd}
<i>Siberia:</i>				
Sakha-Yakutia	0.41 ^{bcd}	0.39 ^{de}	0.41 ^b	0.42 ^d
Tuva	0.47 ^a	0.57 ^a	0.48 ^a	0.61 ^a
<i>Across republics</i>	0.40	0.42	0.32	0.42

Note: Scores are mean scores between 0.00 and 1.00. For perceived competition the scores are recoded from five-point scales. A higher score indicates more negative stereotypes or more perceived competition. Different superscripts (a–e) indicate significant differences between republics ($p < 0.01$) as yielded by analysis of variance (Tukey's post-hoc test).

Factors determining the support for separatism

Support for separatism is linearly regressed on 10 predictors. The linear models are tested for titulars and Russians separately. The values of the predictors and the dependent variable are normalised and standardised beta values will be presented in order to facilitate the comparison of the effects of different predictors. The regression models for both Russians and titulars are tested several times by replacing the predictors of elite activism and economic prosperity with alternatives. Elite activism and gross regional product (GRP) or their alternatives are not entered in the same model because these predictors are collinear. Thus we end up with six models (three for titulars and three for Russians) while testing nine models (one alternative for the predictor of elite activism), namely the Hale (2000) index instead of the Treisman (1997) index, and two for economic prosperity, namely unemployment and tax transfer to the federation as alternatives of GRP. Regression model I tests the effects of the background factors, the inter-group factors, centre pressure and economic optimism. Model II adds elite activism and model III adds gross regional product. The results are presented in Tables 4 and 5 and the effects of the alternative predictors are indicated in the legends.

Background factors

Educational level and age were entered to control for education and age effects in the regression weights of the other predictors. However, it appears that education and age

TABLE 4
PREDICTORS OF TITULAR'S SUPPORT FOR SEPARATISM

<i>Model</i>	<i>I</i>	<i>II</i>	<i>III</i>
<i>Background factors</i>			
Age	-0.04	-0.06	-0.04
Education	-0.01	-0.03	-0.03
<i>Intergroup factors</i>			
Ethnic identification	0.14	0.16	0.15
Economic & political competition	0.22	0.24	0.21
Negative out-group stereotypes	0.12	0.11	0.12
Size out-group (in 1989) ^a	0.13	0.15	0.09
<i>Political factors</i>			
Centre: preventive pressure	0.01	0.04	0.02
Elite activism ^b		0.22	
<i>Economic factors</i>			
Economic optimism	0.06	0.07	0.07
Gross regional product ^c			0.13
Model R^2	0.14	0.19	0.15
R^2 change <i>inter-group factors</i> ^d	0.13		

Notes: Values represent standardised beta values; effects with a significance of $p < 0.01$ are printed in bold.

^aThe effect of the measure of out-group size based on the 2002 Census is almost the same as that of the 1989 Census (Beta coefficient of out-group size in 2002 is 0.12 in model I, 0.13 in Model II and 0.07 in Model III); the coefficients of the other variables remained the same.

^bThe index is based on Treisman (1997). An alternative index for elite activism is the number of weeks after which the republic followed Estonia in declaring sovereignty (Hale 2000). The beta of this index (reversed) is **0.16**; the Model R^2 is **0.15**.

^cUnemployment in the republic in percentages of the active population in 1998 (Goskomstat 1999) as an alternative economic predictor has a beta of **-0.29**; the Model R^2 is **0.19**; tax transfer to the federation as an alternative predictor has a beta of **0.10**; the Model R^2 is **0.15**.

^dF change = 146.28. $p < 0.001$.

have more effect on the support for separatism among Russians than among titulars. Older and higher educated Russians generally object to separatism, while younger titulars seem to support it (see Table 4, model II with elite activism).

Inter-group factors

Strong ethnic identification of titulars with their in-group significantly strengthens their support for separatism (see Table 4). Ethnic identification of Russians has no significant effect on support for or objection to separatism (see Table 5). This confirms hypothesis 1 only partially. As expected, titular in-group identification contributes to support of separatism, but it is not true that Russian identification strengthens opposition to separatism. This may reflect the fact that Russian identification is more civic than ethnic and includes non-Russians as citizens of Russia (Hale 2005). Alternatively, Russian ethnic identification may be more limited and rather captures attachment to the Russian-speaking groups in the republic (Laitin 1998, p. 299).

The effect of perceived economic and political competition on support for separatism is significant among titulars and Russians. However, while the perception of competition is the strongest predictor of support for separatism among titulars,

TABLE 5
PREDICTORS OF RUSSIAN'S SUPPORT FOR SEPARATISM

<i>Model</i>	<i>I</i>	<i>II</i>	<i>III</i>
<i>Background factors</i>			
Age	−0.08	−0.09	−0.06
Education	−0.12	−0.12	−0.12
<i>Intergroup factors</i>			
Ethnic identification	−0.01	0.00	0.02
Economic & political competition	−0.08	−0.08	−0.06
Negative out-group stereotypes	−0.08	−0.03	−0.04
Size out-group (in 1989) ^a	−0.13	−0.17	−0.10
<i>Political factors</i>			
Centre: preventive pressure	−0.04	−0.01	−0.03
Elite activism ^b		0.21	
<i>Economic factors</i>			
Economic optimism	0.13	0.10	0.11
Gross regional product ^c			0.25
Model R^2	0.09	0.13	0.14
R^2 change <i>inter-group factors</i> ^d	0.04		

Notes: Values represent standardised beta values; effects with a significance of $p < 0.01$ are printed in bold.

^aThe effect of the measure of out-group size based on the 2002 Census is weaker ($B = -0.07$) in model I than that of the 1989 census; in model II the effect of out-group size in 2002 is -0.11 and in model III -0.05 . This suggests that out-group size in 1989 has a formative effect on support for separatism among Russians in 1999/2000. Out-group size in 2002 differs from out-group size in 1989 only by slightly higher percentages of titulars in all republics, except for Tuva where the percentages of titulars increased to 77% and in Dagestan where the percentage of Avars decreased to 19%.

^bThe index is based on Treisman (1997). An alternative index for elite activism is the number of weeks after which the republic followed Estonia in declaring sovereignty (Hale 2000). The beta of this index (reversed) is 0.34; the Model R^2 is 0.19.

^cUnemployment in the republic in percentages of the active population in 1998 (Goskomstat 1999) as an alternative economic predictor has a beta of -0.26 ; the Model R^2 is 0.15; tax transfer to the federation as an alternative predictor has a beta of 0.19; the Model R^2 is 0.11.

^dF change = 44.39. $p < 0.001$.

among Russians it is an important predictor of objection to separatism. The effects of negative out-group stereotypes and a larger out-group size are largely the same: negative stereotypes about Russians and a larger size of the Russian out-group are reasons to support separatism for titulars, but negative stereotypes about titulars and a larger size of the titular group are reasons to oppose separatism for Russians. This confirms the expectations in hypotheses 2, 3 and 4. This shows that negative inter-group relations, expressed in a strong identification with the ethnic in-group combined with a negative judgment of the Russian out-group and framed by a competitive relation between the two groups—and more strongly so if the Russian group is larger in size—motivates titulars to support policies attempting to withdraw the ethnic republic from the Russian Federation. Russians may have other reasons to agree with separatism, but not this one. Russians support separatism more if the inter-group relations are positive: if there is no competition but co-operation; if they positively evaluate titulars, although this is less relevant if the republic is already more autonomous and the gross domestic product is large; (see the effect of stereotypes in model II and III in Table 5) and if the titular group is not large in size. It seems that

Russians fear anti-Russian separatism among titulars and are opposed to it. At face value it seems paradoxical that, if their in-group is smaller, titulars support separatism more, while Russians oppose separatism more. But the underlying reason may be the same, namely fear of ethnic domination. Titulars escape from ethnic domination by founding an independent titular republic, while Russians escape from it by keeping the republic in the federation.

Political factors

The estimated likelihood that the Russian Federation will sanction separatism by putting political pressure on the republic, by establishing an economic blockade, or by using military force, has no effect on the support for separatism among titulars. This is not what was expected in hypothesis 5. Similarly, the expectation of federal sanctions of separatism also does not strongly prevent Russians from supporting separatism, especially not when elites actively pursued separatism and when the republic is economically prosperous (see models II and III in Table 5).

More spectacular is the effect of elite activism. The effect of elite activism is positive for titulars as well as for Russians, which means that both groups support separatism more if political elites more eagerly pursued autonomy or independence of the republic. In other words, the elite separatist activity mobilised the populations of the republics to support separatism, as was expected in hypothesis 6. The effect of elite activism is the strongest predictor of support for separatism among Russians and one of the strongest among titulars. Interestingly, when the index of Hale (2000) is used in the model, the regression weight becomes substantially higher among Russians (see table legend for Table 5) and smaller among titulars (see Table 4). This difference in the effect of the two indices suggests that the political content of the activity of the elites—prominent in the measure of Treisman (1997)—mobilised the titulars in particular, while the mobilisation of Russians is a positive accommodation to the earlier establishment—what Hale (2000) measures—of more autonomy as a *fait accompli*.

Economic factors

Economic optimism significantly strengthens support for separatism among titulars and Russians. The standardised beta value is higher among Russians than among titulars and this shows that Russians especially are not reluctant to support separatism if this may be economically advantageous. This confirms hypothesis 6. Even more convincing is the effect of a larger GDP. A larger GDP is for both groups a reason to support separatism and the effect is stronger than that of economic optimism, and again much stronger among Russians. If GDP is replaced by unemployment (in the year 1998) then the differences between the groups are less prominent; the effect on separatism is for both groups significant and negative (see table legends of Tables 4 and 5). Replacement of GDP by tax transfer to the federation has a positive but somewhat weaker effect on the support of separatism for both groups (see table legends of Tables 4 and 5). All economic predictors confirm what was expected in hypothesis 7: if separatism may have positive economic consequences for the population then both Russians and titulars find each other supporting it.

Conclusion

The hypotheses are largely confirmed. Inter-group factors stimulate support for separatism among titulars in particular. Political and economic factors stimulate support for separatism among both Russians and titulars. Three factors did not affect support for separatism as we expected: ethnic identification did not affect support for separatism among Russians; the expected likelihood that the centre would try to prevent separatism by interventions did not really deter titulars or Russians to support separatism; and negative stereotypes about titulars do not always prevent Russians from opposing separatism, particularly not if elite activism was stronger and if the republic is prosperous.

The general linear model explains more of titulars' support for separatism than of Russians' support for separatism (the model *R*-square is a maximum of 0.18 and 0.21, respectively). The contribution of the inter-group factors to the model is large for titulars and substantial for Russians (the *R*-square change is 0.08 and 0.05, respectively). The fact that the inter-group factors have this effect in different directions for titulars and Russians is a crucial finding. However, for both groups the total amount of explained variance is modest. The power of the model might have improved if the nested structure of the republican-level and individual-level predictors could have been taken into account by multi-level analysis, but the number of republics was too small to justify this analysis (Cheung & Au 2005, p. 612).

Discussion

It was an irony of history that the leader destined to carry the Russian Federation out of the collapsing Soviet colossus in 1991 needed the same support from the ethnic republics as Lenin did 70 years earlier. He had to confirm and even enlarge their autonomy. The idea of autonomous ethnic republics contributed in important ways to the emancipation of the non-Russian peoples in Russia—in spite of the fact that the autonomy never carried much weight in the Soviet period. However, the reality of the ethnic republics did not bring an unqualified contribution to the stability and unity of the Russian Federation, certainly not directly after its independence. One of the reasons for this is that titulars share their ethnic territory with Russians and that the Russians are the majority in a substantial number of republics. Nonetheless, titulars were shown to be able to affirm their own language and culture in most republics. This was reinforced by the 'parade of sovereignties'.

Titulars, perceiving the republic as 'theirs', have two important reasons to claim sovereignty and make their republic as independent as possible from the Russian Federation. The first reason is mundane, and the second reason may be based on prejudice. Titular groups may come to see separatism as an easy way to increase the wealth of the republic if it is prosperous and subsidising the Russian Federation through taxation. If titulars have, in addition, reasons to see the Russians in their republic as competitors and the Russian Federation as exploitative, they would simultaneously rule out their 'internal competitor' and their 'external sovereign' by separation. Some scholars argue that such perceptions of competition and external domination are not realistic, because the Russian core of the federation is divided

(Hale 2005). But others wonder why the Russian Federation has been so eager to reduce or even destroy the power of the ethnic republics since 2000 (Melvin 2005, p. 209). Was it because Russians in some cases shared the support for separatism among titulars? Titulars support separatism for two reasons: negative inter-group relations with Russians in the republic and the prospect of becoming more prosperous, whereas Russians have only one reason: the prospect of becoming more prosperous. Hence, a united front closes in favour of separatism if the actions of Russians and titulars are both influenced by the economic returns of the republic.

One of the findings of this research is that not only the minority position but also the majority position may lead to separatism. This defies the traditional logic of nationalism and mainstream theory of inter-group relations. The traditional scenario is that a minority group is discriminated against, learns to loathe the dominant majority group (Tajfel 1982) and wants to liberate itself by separating from the nation of the majority (Gellner 1983, p. 62; Horowitz 1985, p. 264). But the political logic of the inter-group relations in a federation with ethnic republics is more complex. First, separatism is not only typical of minorities but also of majorities. Second, separatism is not always motivated by negative out-group evaluations; only among titular groups did perceived competition and negative attitudes towards Russians provoke separatism. Third, the economic rationale of keeping the republic's wealth motivates both Russians and titulars to support separatism. These points qualify the traditional logic of nationalism.

The findings show that the conditions structuring the relations between the two groups determine the political consequences of inter-group antagonism. An asymmetrical dynamic of popular support for separatism results from relative group size and the ethnic foundation of the political-administrative structure: Russians care mainly about controlling the economic wealth of the republic, while titulars are in addition driven by ethnic claims of entitlement to the republic. The evidence for this is that Russians reciprocate the negative evaluations of titulars, but these negative evaluations do not motivate Russians to endorse separatism. And it is logical that separatism is not the most obvious way for Russians to escape from ethnic antagonism; the opposite, strengthening their position by eliminating the autonomy of the republic, would be more to the point.

How extensive is the support for separatism in the ethnic republics? Are there ethnic republics where the majority of the population is in favour of separatism? We should remember that the survey was carried out in randomly selected urban areas with at least 10% of Russian residents of the republics. Therefore the findings are not indicative for rural areas. However, within these limits the answer for 1999/2000 is that there was no evidence of majority support for separatism in any of the selected republics. Maximum support is reached in Tuva where 50% of the titulars and 8% of the Russians support separatism, followed by Tatarstan (51% and 21%) and Sakha-Yakutia (52% and 31%). In these three republics, like in all others, titulars proportionally outnumber Russians in support for separatism. It is only in Karelia that the Russian support almost equals that of titulars.

The Russian supporters of separatism are across the board young, lower educated and believe in the economic prospects of the republic. They know that the Russian group is large enough in the republic to remain dominant and they are

willing to co-operate with titulars. This Russian separatism seems to find its reason in personal and national optimism, not in resentment about the power of the titulars. The picture for titular separatism is different, not completely, but yet substantively. Titulars supporting separatism are also young, but not necessarily lower educated. They identify strongly with their ethnic group. They are also optimistic about the economic future of the republic and want to keep a larger share of its wealth. But the substantive difference with Russians who support separatism is the underlying antagonism: the motivation for separatism is confrontational. It is a reaction to Russian demographic threat, and probably a dramatic attempt to change the status quo. But the irony of titular separatism is that the political status of the titular republics places the titulars in a triangular relation to Russians that limits for them the options to change the terms of the inter-group relation (Brubaker 1996, p. 76). If they change the terms for the internal Russians, the federation may intervene, and if they change the terms for the federation, the internal Russians may defect.

The political dynamics of the inter-group relation between titulars and Russians in the ethnic republics shows one of the weaknesses of the multicultural Russian Federation. The weakness lies not in the nature of its multiculturalism, but in the territorial interpretation of it. Although it is not very likely that the popular drive towards separatism will stimulate the political elites to really attempt to secede from the Russian Federation, it is not surprising that the Russian Federation has approached the issue of separatism differently since 2000. Separatist tendencies can quickly escalate. Therefore authority was recentralised in the fragile federation by a district redivision in which the ethnic republics are included in larger districts (Jack 2004, p. 234; Melvin 2005, p. 209).

It is not certain whether this policy will be successful. It is not very likely that it will change the inter-group competition and negative evaluation of Russians by the titular populations and exactly these negative conditions are a powerful predictor of titular separatism. The federation gambles that separatism is powerless when power is drained from the ethnic republics. But that may not drain the feelings of ethnic entitlement of titulars to have their 'own' republics.

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Appendix A: Political and economic characteristics of 10 republics of the Russian Federation

TABLE A1

POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC CHARACTERISTICS OF 10 REPUBLICS OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION

<i>Republics</i>	<i>% Unemployment</i>	<i>Elite activism</i>
Karelia	16.6	9
Komi	17.8	12
Tatarstan	10.9	12
Bashkortostan	13.4	18
Udmurtia	13.1	15
Adygea	16.0	57
Dagestan (Avars)	30.0	50
Kabardino-Balk.	22.4	35
Sakha-Yakutia	13.6	16
Tuva	20.9	22

Sources: Gross regional product: McAuley (1997); elite activism: the number of weeks after which the republic followed Estonia in declaring sovereignty (Hale 2000).